

We need to make some changes to make sure that will not happen again. But not this majority Congress. They are worried about whether Dave McCurdy, former Congressman, can get a job downtown.

It started this way when they took over. The first thing they told people was fire the Democrats. They got rid of all the assets that poor people and workers had to gather information here. They want to represent powerful people, and that is just fine, but do not kid the American people. Do not go into that well and tell me you care about health care.

COME HOME, MR. PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very helpful to all of the constituents in my district to sort of cut through the shrill rhetoric on the other side of the aisle today and kind of get behind what is driving all of this political force.

See, it appears to me that the Democratic leadership and the President have placed petty politics above the interest of American children, America's veterans, America's seniors, and recently America's farmers.

The farm bill that was just vetoed recently had more money in it than the President's request, but it did not spend it on the programs that the Federal Government and the President wanted, so he vetoed it. It was not that it was anything in the best interest of America to do, but he vetoed it for political reasons.

Let us just take a look at what is behind this injustice to the American people. The principal motivation for the President and the Democratic leadership's intended shutdown of government is sort of to take the spotlight off the scandals that the President has gotten himself into.

It is also evident that the President has been AWOL, absent without leave, from his duties during most of the year. Let us consider this. The first 282 days of 1998, Mr. Clinton spent 45 percent, or approximately 127 days, working for his employer, the American taxpayer.

So what has he done with the majority of his time as President this year? Let us take a look at that. Fund raising. I think the new motto of the White House ought to be "Show me the money, Mr. President."

Mr. Clinton has spent 56 days away from his job raising money, gaining millions and millions of dollars from wealthy elitists, big business tycoons, liberal special interests, and media moguls.

Note that most of these fund-raisers, of course, were outside of the Washington, D.C. area. All totaled, Mr. Clinton has attended 97 today. Tomorrow in Florida will be number 98. Special in-

terest fund-raisers gathering up those millions and millions of dollars, rather than working with Congress on problems facing all Americans.

The "Show me the money, Mr. President" ought to be here working with the working Congress. Let us take the vacations that he has had. Please do not get me wrong. There is nothing wrong with a much-needed break from a hectic work schedule. But there is something wrong when the vacations start interfering with the job of being President of the United States.

Not many hardworking men and women around this country have the luxury of working only 127 days and getting 32 days vacation, paid at that by the taxpayers of the United States.

Let us see, that would include 13 days at Martha's Vineyard, 9 days in Camp David, 5 days in the Virgin Islands, 4 days at a Utah ski resort, and, oh, yes, 1 day in Aspen, Colorado. Obviously, the only thing that got in the way of all of these vacations was his fund-raising schedule.

All this is bad enough, but it does not end there. Let us take the travel abroad, overseas junkets. During this time frame, the President spent 45 days abroad visiting 13 different countries, including Ghana, Chile, Uganda, Senegal, Germany, Rwanda, England, Ireland, Russia, Northern Ireland, and, oh, yes, a \$50 million trip to China just to pay homage and tribute to the barbarians of Tiananmen Square.

But, my colleagues, that is not all. Outside the fund-raisers, vacations and expensive junkets abroad, the President has spent an additional 22 days on the road at photo-ops in telegenic settings outside of the Washington area. Most of these photo-ops were strategically placed with an eye to upcoming elections like New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, and even the scenic area of Lake Tahoe.

Mr. Speaker, it is very obvious that the duties of the President are being pushed aside at a time when there are critical issues facing America's children, veterans, seniors, and, yes, even farmers today.

Even as we speak here today, Congress is in session working, doing its job to help save Social Security, promote and improve our children's education, and to provide for America's veterans.

Yet, the President is once again preparing to go to another fund-raiser tomorrow in Florida. That is right. The President is once again planning to be AWOL while we here in Congress are hard at work solving our Nation's problems.

Clearly, it is time for America's part-time President to clear his travel calendar, clear his fund-raising calendar, clear his vacation calendar, and stay home so that we can get the Nation's work done.

INVEST IN AMERICA'S CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. SANDLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, American children, American education, what better investment could we make? What higher priority could we have in the United States Congress than in our children?

Mr. Speaker, today, we have heard a lot of talking back and forth about the name of this Congress. I do not know about that, and I do not particularly want to get involved in that, but I do know this, we have an opportunity today to be known as the "do something good Congress," because we can take one vote, take one day, and we can invest in America's children, and we can invest in education.

We have had a lot of talk today about who controls education. Education is properly controlled at the local level. In Texas, local citizens elect a local school board that hires a local superintendent, and they have local teachers that teach local children of local parents that support our local schools.

But that does not mean that the Federal Government cannot be helpful. We can be a junior partner in education. We can help provide the tools and the capital that our local communities need to address local problems and educate local children.

A junior partner is not controlling, but he is important. We need to meet our important responsibility and obligation to America's children by joining with local communities in education.

Let me talk briefly about four areas of concern. Number one, smaller classes. Studies confirm that young students in classrooms between 15 and 20 students learn more rapidly, and they learn better than other children.

The Federal Government, as a junior partner, can make capital available, can make funds available to help communities hire more teachers on a cost-shared basis, on a cost-shared basis. \$7.3 billion over the next 5 years would put us on track to hiring 100,000 new teachers to spread across this country in grades one through three and will reduce the class size to 18 children.

If we ask teachers how best to bring down violence in school and how best to teach children, they say bring down class size.

School modernization. In order for our students to learn and compete in the economy of the 21st century, schools must be well equipped. A 1996 GAO study found that, over a quarter of Texas schools have at least one building in need of extensive repair, and over half of the schools in Texas have schools with at least one major building feature that has to be replaced, such as all of the plumbing, all of the air conditioning. There are similar problems across the entire United States.

To address this shortfall, the Federal Government can provide tax credits. We can give credits to folks to pay interest on nearly \$22 billion in bonds to build and renovate public schools. We

have an obligation to build schools in this country and to make those facilities available for our children like our parents did for us, because, Mr. Speaker, nearly one in every three schools in America today was built before World War II.

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That is just not right, and we can do better and we must do better for the children of this country.

Let us talk about safer classrooms. Drug use among our 12th graders, over half of whom have already tried drugs, is up. Only 30 percent of public elementary schools in this country have after-school programs and in rural areas, such as where I am from in Texas, the number drops to 12 percent. The Federal Government should continue to make grants available to work in partnership with local government and communities for prevention, for early intervention and enforcement efforts.

Further, we should authorize funding for school-based partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and school districts to combat crime, to combat drug activities and to make sure that our children have a safe place to learn.

Finally, better technology. Give our kids the skills they are going to need for the jobs that are coming up in the next century. We need to ensure that our children have the necessary technology in the classroom. That means modern computers, Internet connections, educational software, educated, well-paid, enthused, encouraged teachers that are ready, willing and able to teach our children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOLOMON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHANGE IN ORDER OF TAKING SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to substitute for the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

HMO REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the tone that we heard from the gentleman from Connecticut.

I am a physician. I still practice. What we were supposed to have received from Mr. GEJDENSON was that the problems in the health care field today have come about because of this Congress. They have come about because of a law called ERISA that this Congress a number of years ago passed. And the thing that strikes me rather peculiarly is what we hear as HMO attacks instead of attacks on physicians who are not doing their job.

The number one job of a physician is to do no harm. I want to tell my colleagues, if I do an outpatient surgery, which I do almost every weekend, and my patient is not ready to go home, I fight and fight and fight, but I do not give up. My patient stays there until they are ready to go home. Do you know what? I win those battles with HMOs. I do not lose those battles. What we are really hearing is the inability of physicians to have backbone to stand up.

The law that created the situation that we have today was created several years ago, not by a conservative Republican Congress, but by a rather liberal Democrat Congress. I do not usually say anything partisan on this floor, but the tone of the speech is inappropriate for this august body. To not challenge that tone will do more to destroy this institution than anything I know. We passed a bill, it is called the Patient Protection Act. It is not designed to put more lawyers at work and increase health insurance costs by lining the pockets of people who are going to challenge HMOs through the court system. There is no question we have to make changes. Those changes are being made. They have been made with this Congress. But the very idea that this Congress, this Republican Congress, is responsible for the emotional diatribe that we just heard is anything but the truth.

The truth is, we have tremendous cost pressures on health care in this country. HMOs have done a lot to help us solve those problems. Are they perfect? No. Have they made mistakes? No. Is there any physician before HMOs were created that has not made a similar mistake of letting someone go home too soon? No. So we can emotionalize these issues. We can try to make them a campaign issue, but what we do is serious damage to the real problems that we have to solve in this country.

And my heart is broken that we have the kind of discourse that we have in this House that creates a false paper tiger and then sets it down. To the American public, I apologize for what we heard in the past 30 minutes from the gentleman from Connecticut. It is my hope that we can carry on conversations in this House that come up to the level of integrity, honesty and maturity that this House deserves.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF TAKING SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to substitute for the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

ON THE EDUCATION AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very unusual occasion that we are experiencing today, that this House would be engaged in discussing important issues on a Sunday. It is even more unusual because we had expected to adjourn on October 9, Friday. We were given a calendar that so indicated.

The reason that we are all here on a Sunday and expect to even be meeting on a Federal holiday tomorrow is that the Republican-controlled Congress has not been able to work out its own differences with respect to very, very important bills, particularly those that the Constitution requires that we pass before we go home having to do the funding of government.

I rise today to pay special attention to the items that I am concerned with on the education agenda. I came to the Congress initially in 1965 because I was deeply concerned about the future of education at that point. Ever since then in the 20 years that I have served in Congress, I have spent almost the entire time by serving on the education committee. I also serve on budget. I asked to be assigned to budget because I felt that so many of the issues that related to education were dependent upon funding. So some years ago I sought a seat on the Committee on the Budget and I was so honored to serve. We worked very hard. We produced our budget resolution and for the first time since the budget process was enacted in the early 1970s, this is the first time that the Congress has not voted on a budget resolution.

So something is happening within the Republican majority that has caused us to be here today on a Sunday and not to be able to finish on time. One of the major bills that we have not been able to pass is the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill. It never came out of our House Committee on Appropriations and it is still locked in tremendous disagreement within the Republican conference, as well as with the Senate and with the administration and with House Democrats.

Earlier there were comments about the President's schedule and how he was not attending to the business at hand. I would like to say that this Congress has a record of only being in session 106 days this entire year up to Friday, October 9. This is a record of